



State Senator  
**RUSTY BLACK**

*Serving Missouri's 12th Senatorial District*

2026



# LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*Second Regular Session of the 103rd Missouri General Assembly*



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# 2026 Legislative Report

## Session Concludes

The 2026 legislative session came to a close on May 15, after months of hard work, meaningful debate and a mix of accomplishments and challenges.

A big focus in the final weeks was the state budget. After extensive discussion and conference committee work, we passed a \$48.7 billion operating budget and sent it to the governor ahead of the constitutional deadline. It's always one of the most important and detailed parts of the session, and this year was no different.

The Missouri General Assembly approved several healthcare-related changes this session, and I saw progress on an issue I've worked on for years. **Senate Bill 975** was truly agreed to by the General Assembly. I've long supported efforts to help rural providers stay sustainable and serve their communities, and this bill is a solid step toward addressing both short- and long-term needs.

All of the legislation that was passed during session has been signed into law by the governor, including legislation restricting intoxicating hemp products. You can view the full list of passed bills on the Missouri Senate website, [senate.mo.gov/legislation](https://senate.mo.gov/legislation).

Lawmakers will return to the Capitol on Sept. 16 for veto session. During this brief but important session, lawmakers consider any overrides on vetoes issued by the governor.

## Strengthening Rural Ambulance Services



**Senate Bill 975**, which updates provisions relating to ambulance districts, was truly agreed to by the Missouri General Assembly this session and sent to the governor for his consideration.

This legislation is designed to help rural ambulance districts operate more effectively and better meet the needs of the communities they serve. In many parts of Missouri, these districts are stretched thin with staffing shortages, rising costs and long response distances. Senate Bill 975 gives them additional

tools to improve stability and strengthen their day-to-day operations while also planning for long-term sustainability.

I have worked on this issue for years, both during my time in the Missouri Senate and previously as a state representative, because rural emergency services are often the first and only line of care in many communities. When seconds matter, those providers have to be able to rely on a system that works with them, not against them.

Senate Bill 975 represents a practical step forward. It won't solve every challenge rural ambulance districts face, but it does move us in the right direction by addressing both immediate operational needs and longer-term structural concerns in a meaningful way.

## Protecting Veterans' Benefits

**Senate Bill 974**, which focuses on protections related to compensation for services regarding veterans' benefits, made important progress this session.

This legislation would have placed reasonable standards on fees charged by individuals assisting veterans with filing and navigating benefit claims, helping ensure that those who served our country are not taken advantage of during an already complex process.

The bill was passed early in February and moved to the House of Representatives with strong bipartisan support. Throughout the process, there was broad recognition of the need to bring greater clarity and fairness to this area and to better protect veterans seeking the benefits they have earned.

While I was happy to see SB 974 make meaningful progress, it ultimately did not reach the finish line before the end of the session. Even so, the conversation it advanced is an important one, and I remain committed to continuing this work on behalf of Missouri veterans.



# 2026 Legislative Report



## Strengthening Missouri's Budget Priorities

Being responsible with taxpayer dollars is one of the Legislature's most important responsibilities. This year, I was honored to serve as chair of the Missouri Senate Appropriations Committee, where I worked closely with my colleagues to carefully review budget requests, evaluate priorities and make thoughtful decisions about how our state's resources are spent.



*Senator Black during one of many Senate Appropriations Committee hearings.*

In addition to passing the fiscal year 2027 state operating budget, the Missouri General Assembly also gave final approval to **House Bill 2014**, the supplemental appropriations bill. This legislation allows for targeted adjustments to the 2026 fiscal year budget, helping ensure that essential state programs and services remain stable and fully operational.

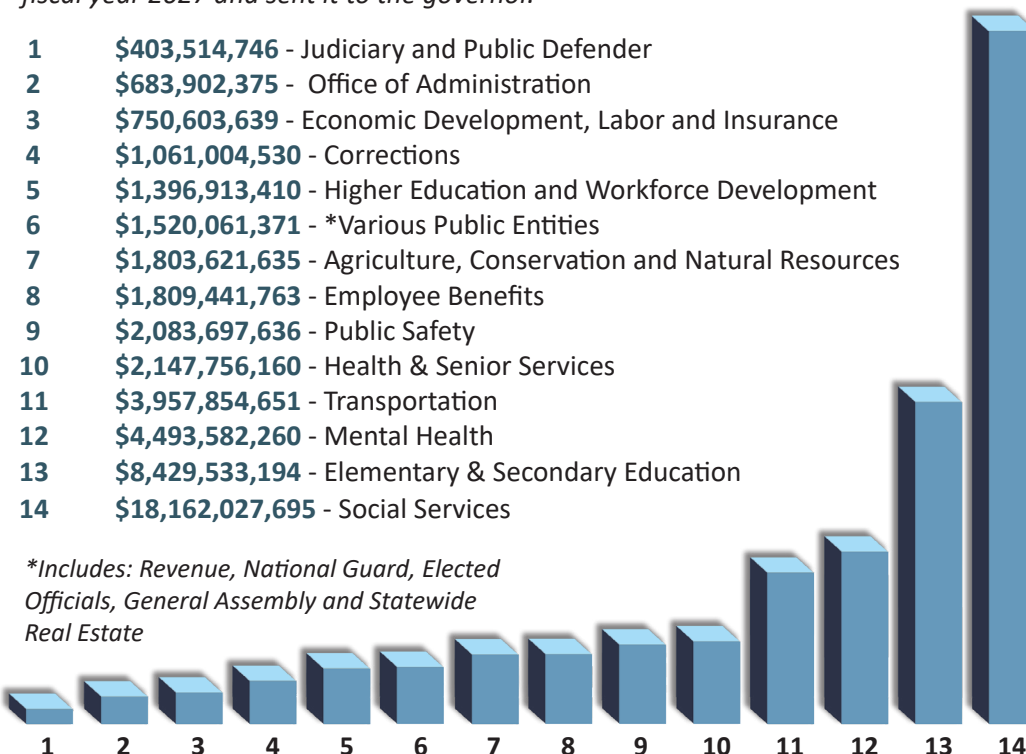
Earlier this year, I voiced concerns about the governor's recommended FY 2027 budget, particularly as it relates to funding for disability services. Programs such as Day Habilitation Services and Self-Directed Support are critical for Missourians with disabilities and for the families who care for them. Missouri's most vulnerable citizens, and the families who care for them, deserve our full attention and continued support.

## Allocating Missouri's \$48.7 Billion Budget

*The Missouri General Assembly passed a \$48.7 billion state operating budget for fiscal year 2027 and sent it to the governor.*

|    |                                                                          |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>\$403,514,746</b> - Judiciary and Public Defender                     |
| 2  | <b>\$683,902,375</b> - Office of Administration                          |
| 3  | <b>\$750,603,639</b> - Economic Development, Labor and Insurance         |
| 4  | <b>\$1,061,004,530</b> - Corrections                                     |
| 5  | <b>\$1,396,913,410</b> - Higher Education and Workforce Development      |
| 6  | <b>\$1,520,061,371</b> - *Various Public Entities                        |
| 7  | <b>\$1,803,621,635</b> - Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources |
| 8  | <b>\$1,809,441,763</b> - Employee Benefits                               |
| 9  | <b>\$2,083,697,636</b> - Public Safety                                   |
| 10 | <b>\$2,147,756,160</b> - Health & Senior Services                        |
| 11 | <b>\$3,957,854,651</b> - Transportation                                  |
| 12 | <b>\$4,493,582,260</b> - Mental Health                                   |
| 13 | <b>\$8,429,533,194</b> - Elementary & Secondary Education                |
| 14 | <b>\$18,162,027,695</b> - Social Services                                |

*\*Includes: Revenue, National Guard, Elected Officials, General Assembly and Statewide Real Estate*



## Advancing Priorities

Sometimes, a bill may take several years to fully develop. Each proposal goes through research, committee hearings and debate in both chambers before final consideration. When a bill falls short, the work doesn't stop. We continue refining and reintroducing these policies because they matter to the people we serve.

**Senate Bill 883** addressed the growing use of advanced reproductive technologies in livestock production. As Missouri agriculture continues to modernize, this bill sought to create clearer pathways for trained specialists working with tools like embryo transfer, while maintaining safeguards for animal health and producer confidence.

**Senate Bill 885** focused on protecting Missouri's agricultural land from new foreign ownership. It would have returned state law to the framework in place prior to 2013 by prohibiting new foreign purchases of Missouri farmland after Aug. 28, 2026. This effort was aimed at strengthening food security, protecting Missouri producers and providing certainty for farmers and ranchers. I previously carried similar legislation in 2025 and remain committed to this issue.

**Senate Bill 1536** would have helped families during some of life's most difficult moments by allowing next of kin to make healthcare decisions for incapacitated patients.

Other measures of mine that did not pass included updates to the state retirement system in **Senate Bill 1054**, and **Senate Bill 1551**, which would have given certain cities the option to pursue a transient guest tax to support tourism and local economic development.

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Thank you for staying engaged with state government. It is an honor to represent the 12th District in the Missouri Senate. My office is always here to assist you at 573-751-1415.

## Capitol Visitors



*It's always an honor to welcome visitors to Missouri's beautiful State Capitol.*

